place of abode, the Bill would prove a great calamity.

This argument more especially applies to the cottage tenements (usually consisting of two rooms and a back shed), of which some hundreds of streets in the suburbs of the metropolis, inhabited by the working classes, are composed. By the new Bill, each of these tenements is to be styled a fourth-rate house, upon the erection of which a fee of 4*l.* 4*s.* is to be paid the district surveyor, and in the materials of which, the new Bill requires that from 30*l.* to 50*l.* shall be expended in the walls and floors more than the amount rendered necessary by the existing Act. To do this, the builder must either raise his rent above that of existing tenements (in which case his houses would remain empty), or he must endeavour to save the money by economising in the doors, the windows, the shutters, the staircase, the closets, the coal-shed, or the water-cistern; depriving in this manner the future inmates of some of the conveniences most essential to their health and comfort. It would be most unwise to make this sacrifice for the sake of increased solidity in the inferior class of buildings, which are not designed nor required to last as long as a nobleman's mansion: nor need the sacrifice be made for the sake of greater security against fire, because it is a well-known fact, that fires rarely occur in third and fourth-rate houses, owing to the circumstance, that among the poor a room containing a fire or lighted candle is never left.

The direct tendency of expensiveness of construction to discourage building—to cause ruinous houses to be only put in repair that would otherwise be pulled down, and to crowd an increasing population in confined limits, shews the extreme importance of avoiding in building regulations all restrictions that are not absolutely necessary for the security of the public; and also of diminishing, as much as possible, existing charges now affecting buildings, or building alterations and improvements. This was the excellent design of the repeal of the timber duties; but the object is wholly lost sight of in the present instance. The framers of the Bill have overlooked the propriety of rendering the machinery by which the new regulations are to be enforced less expensive than the old, which might easily have been done by a consolidation of offices, and have proceeded upon the opposite principle,—increasing the cost to the public of the old machinery, besides creating additional offices under the new.

By the present Bill it is proposed to more than double the fees of district surveyors, paying them at the least two guineas for every one guinea they now receive, and to give in numerous cases ten guinea fees to a new class of officers to be termed official referees. The nature of the burden this will impose upon the public may be ascertained by a very simple calculation. It appears from the population returns that in the ten years between 1831 and 1841, there was an increase in the number of inhabited houses of 66,335 in the four metropolitan counties of Middlesex, Kent, Surrey, and Essex; the greater proportion of which were houses built in the suburbs of London.* A charge of four guineas (the fee for a fourth-rate building) upon each of these houses, would amount to 278,607*l.*; but this amount does not represent the half of what would probably be paid by the public: to obtain the exact sum it would be necessary to add the fees paid upon old houses pulled down and rebuilt, the fees upon alterations and repairs, and the difference between the fees for the lowest and the highest class of buildings, some of which (buildings intended for any public object) amount to the enormous sum of 49*l.* 7*s.* upon each building. With these the local taxation imposed by the Bill upon the metropolis cannot be estimated at less than 50,000*l.* per annum.

The intention of these charges is, we may presume, to give a greater stimulus than at present to the exertions of district surveyors in the discharge of their duty; but it is obvious upon a moment's reflection—first, that high fees, alone, will not secure this object; and, secondly, that much higher salaries than district surveyors will realize under this Bill might be secured (supposing high salaries to be required) by a consolidation of offices; and to the great advantage of the public service. For example—under the existing system, and that which is proposed by the Bill, two surveyors are appointed at the public expense to attend to the drainage of the same house—the district surveyor and the surveyor of the commissioners of sewers; but one surveyor, if a properly qualified person, would be equal to this duty, and to divide it, is to divide the responsibility, and to cause the work to be sometimes slovenly or inefficiently performed. Local taxation might be diminished, and yet the office of public surveyor be raised in value and importance by combining under one head the duties now exercised by surveyors of highways, parochial surveyors, and surveyors for the assessment of rates and taxes. There appears no reason to doubt that the difficulties which would attend any plan of immediate general consolidation, might ultimately be overcome; but the present Bill does not take a single step in that direction.

It is a further defect, that, notwithstanding the high fees to be paid district surveyors, no provision is made by the Bill for securing the appointment of only competent officers. There is to be no Board of Examination, no certificate of qualification, and the kind of skill required for the office is not specified. The candidate is not required to furnish proof that he is acquainted with the mathematics of architecture, with the science of trigonometry, or with the use of the spirit-level: it is only necessary that he should call himself an architect, and be above thirty years of age! The natural result will be, as heretofore, that candidates will make no effort to render themselves especially fit for the duties to be discharged, but will rest their hope of election upon the activity of a canvass, or upon their personal connections among the magistrates with whom the appointment will rest.

This deficiency in the Bill cannot be too strongly deplored. The success of the wisest measure of legislation is entirely dependent upon the local administration; and the most important provisions of an Act for Building Regulations must necessarily fail of their effect, if left to surveyors owing their appointment less to merit than patronage, and whose interest as private architects may sometimes be opposed to their public duty.

It is a glaring fault of the existing system, that an architect, who cannot avoid having a disposition to interpret an Act of Parliament in his own favour, is allowed to be the district surveyor for his own works: it is also a fault that the duties of the office are often discharged by deputy. The remedy in both these cases would be to appoint, instead of numerous surveyors chiefly occupied with their own private business, a few only, at fairly remunerative salaries, to give up their whole time to the public.

Among the details of the measure there are many which call for a careful reconsideration. Some of the clauses involve false principles of construction opposed to the chief object of the Bill,—increased strength and solidity. Thus clause 43, which enforces a girder in every room above fifteen feet square, is a return to the old and objectionable practice of throwing the whole weight of a floor upon one part of a wall, instead of distributing the weight equally over every part. Clause 82 requires that joists and girders, instead of being let into a wall at a sufficient distance from the flues, shall, if the wall be a party wall, rest only upon iron shoes and corbels—the weakest principle upon which a floor can be supported; and the mode proposed of estimating the rate of building by the height of the walls without including the rooms in the roofs, offers a premium upon the construction of curbed roofs, unsightly in appearance, and without any direct bearing.

It may also be remarked that owing to verbal omissions in the clause relating to the scantlings of joists and girders (43) a house with fire-proof floors could not be constructed; the usual way being to place joists of half the customary thickness upon brick arches supported by iron girders, and the Bill making no exception in their favour. The Bill contains numerous inaccurate or ambiguous definitions, calculated to produce much confusion, of which a striking instance may be observed in clause 14—relating to public institutions. As the clause now stands, every building used for "purposes of instruction," or as "a place of diversion and resort," is an eighth-rate building, which would include infant schools and beer-shops; and upon each of these 49*l.* 7*s.* would have been paid in fees to district surveyors and official referees.*

A general characteristic of the Bill, is an attempt to legislate upon minute points, which cannot be embraced within an Act of Parliament without leading to vexatious, and yet unnecessary interference. Thus, by clause 62, no shop-front is allowed to be higher than 15 feet; that is to say, not so high as two of the most attractive shop-fronts in London—one at the corner of the Quadrant, the other in Ludgate-hill; and by the same clause, no sign or notice board can be placed above 18 feet from the ground, however firmly secured in the building—to the great inconvenience of numerous parties occupying a first and second-floor for business purposes, especially in the city.

By clause 93, a party wall condemned by the official referees as "decayed and ruinous," and as "not sufficiently secure against fire," is yet not to be pulled down till after the expiration of six calendar months, from the date of the first notice to the owner or occupant!

Clause 27 gives to any two magistrates the extraordinary and questionable summary power to declare any trade a nuisance they may deem to be such, and to inflict a penalty of 50*l.*; and generally by the Bill, powers are given to "any two justices of the peace," which would be better entrusted to the stipendiary magistrates of the police offices, or to a special tribunal.

One of the clauses relating to drainage would inflict a great injustice upon landlords. Clause 37 throws the entire expense of building new sewers upon the landlord, without regard to the beneficial lease which may be held by the tenant. The clause as it stands would affect the value of even ground-rents. This is doubtless an oversight, as a different provision is made in the case of party walls; but other clauses relating to drainage are open to very serious objection. The expenses of making drains is one of the principal reasons why innumerable houses in London are left without any effective drainage; and these expenses are all increased by the present Bill. Clause 41 proposes to do away with nine-inch barrel drains, which have always been considered sufficient for third and fourth-rate houses. Clause 38 requires that every cesspool shall be made to drain into a sewer if within 100 feet, although there may often be no accessible means of communication; and the Bill makes no provision for securing adequate supplies of water to the drain; and without water the drain could not be trapped so as to prevent the escape of the foul gases generated in the sewer. By clauses 35 and 42, a superintendence over drains and cesspools is given to parish overseers, in addition to that of the district surveyor, and that of the surveyor to the commissioners of sewers. This divided jurisdiction could not be otherwise than injurious, and the small builder would probably, in many cases, become himself an overseer to facilitate his objects.

As a commission has been appointed by Government to inquire into the drainage of the metropolis, it appears exceedingly desirable that the whole of that part of the present Bill which relates to this subject, should be referred to the commission; and perhaps the proper course would be to postpone any new legislative measure for building until the commissioners had reported what changes may be required in the existing drainage laws. For

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* Inhabited Houses, 1831.

Middlesex	160,493
Kent	82,144
Surrey	80,070
Essex	37,189
	399,959

Inhabited Houses, 1841.

Middlesex	207,670
Kent	93,347
Surrey	95,878
Essex	67,604
	466,194

This is exclusive of the cities of London and Westminster. It is to be regretted that there are no means of comparing the increase of houses in the metropolis, as the boundaries of what is called the metropolis have never been legally defined.

* Fee as for a first-rate building . . £7 7 0
Additional fee . . 10 10 0
Fees to official referees—Ten guineas each 31 10 0
£49 7 0